

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending.

**Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103**

Claims 1 and 3-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP 2002-241608 to Kikuchi et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0130405 to Takagi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Examiner asserts that Kikuchi discloses an oxygen-absorbing resin composition that constitutes the island portion of the present invention. Though acknowledging that Kikuchi does not disclose or suggest a resin composition as the island portion in an islands-in-sea structure with an additional resin component as the sea portion, the Examiner cites Takagi as teaching an islands-in-sea micro structure constituted by Takagi's components A and B. According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious to combine the island-and-sea micro structure of Takagi with the resin composition of Kikuchi, because the island-and-sea micro structure of Takagi enables a thermoplastic resin to have improved molding workability and excellent mechanical properties, thus producing a packing container with excellent oxygen absorbing properties and processability.

However, even if the cited references are combined, the presently claimed invention would not be obtained.

The oxygen absorbing functional component of the present invention is finely dispersed to increase the whole surface area and thereby improve the oxygen absorbing property and gas-barrier property from a time when the content is first filled. The effect of attaining the oxygen-absorbing property from the beginning of filling the container is achieved by selecting an average particle size of the island portions to be not larger than 3.5  $\mu\text{m}$  and by setting a ratio

$N/M$  of the total surface area  $N$  of the island portions and the volume  $M$  of the packing container to be not smaller than  $20\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The effect of attaining the oxygen-absorbing property from the beginning of filling the container is not achieved by the resin composition of Kikuchi that simply has an islands-in-sea structure.

Takagi discloses an islands-in-sea structure, wherein carbon black is present in the amorphous thermoplastic resin that forms island portions, and hollow carbon fibrils are present in the crystalline thermoplastic resin that forms the sea portion, to thereby attain mechanical strength and heat resistance, as well as electric conductivity and antistatic property. Takagi further discloses that the island phase has a long diameter of  $0.1$  to  $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ , and the island portion has a weight average particle size of not smaller than  $3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ . Takagi does not at all disclose or suggest forming many small islands in order to increase the total surface area of the island portions so that the ratio  $N/M$  exceeds  $20$ .

Applicants ask the Examiner to consider Comparative Example 2 of the present specification. In Comparative Example 2, an islands-in-sea structure is formed, wherein the island portions have an average particle size of  $4.30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$  and the ratio  $N/M$  is  $7.4$ , which are outside the presently claimed respective ranges. As a result, the container of Comparative Example 2 has a concentration of oxygen dissolved in water which is inferior to those of the containers that have ratios  $N/M$  of not smaller than  $20$  (i.e., Examples 1 to 10).

Thus, even if one skilled in the art did combine Kikuchi with Takagi, the present invention, as defined by present Claim 1, would not be obtained. Furthermore, Takagi relates to producing molded articles such as electric and electronic parts, but does not at all describe or suggest a packing container of the invention (or that of Kikuchi). Thus, Applicants question

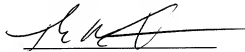
whether one of ordinary skill would combine the cited references in the first instance.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas M. Hunter  
Registration No. 64,676

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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